

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 942

By Kane

A RESOLUTION to posthumously honor Mary Frances Housley.

WHEREAS, the State of Tennessee is blessed with many courageous citizens who are willing to come to the rescue of their fellow human beings during times of crisis and risk their own lives to save others; even so, the legacy of Mary Frances Housley is astounding; and

WHEREAS, a native of Fountain City and a graduate of Knoxville's Central High School, Mary Beth Housley lost her life after saving ten passengers from a flaming airplane crash; and

WHEREAS, Miss Housley had only been working as a flight attendant for National Airlines for five months when the accident occurred on January 14, 1951; and

WHEREAS, the airplane was completing the first leg of its journey from Newark to Philadelphia with twenty-five passengers and three crew members, including Miss Housley, aboard; and

WHEREAS, as the pilot attempted to land on the icy runway, the airplane skidded and broke through a fence, finally coming to a stop over a ten-foot ditch; a fuel tank had burst, and flames consumed much of the airplane; and

WHEREAS, bravely springing into action, Mary Frances Housley helped passengers unbuckle their seat belts, many of which were jammed, and encouraged others to escape the inferno by jumping into the ditch; and

WHEREAS, Miss Housley made ten trips into the burning airplane and rescued ten people; however, she did not return from her eleventh trip; and

WHEREAS, five women, including Miss Housley, and two infants perished in the fire; Miss Housley's body was found lying in the airplane's aisle with her arms wrapped around the body of a four-month-old girl; and

WHEREAS, the Knoxville City Council has named the Holbrook Drive Bridge in Miss Housley's honor, a most fitting memorial to this brave native daughter of the city; and

WHEREAS, although ten people credited Mary Frances Housley with saving their lives, neither proper respect nor gratitude has ever been shown for her heroism on that fateful day in Philadelphia; and

WHEREAS, while it is impossible for us to sufficiently repay our debt to Miss Housley, it is imperative that we honor her memory and extoll her courageous deeds to the greatest extent of our abilities; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED TENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of Mary Frances Housley, reflecting upon her heroism in saving the lives of ten passengers during an airplane crash on January 14, 1951, and sacrificing her own life while attempting to rescue an eleventh infant passenger.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.